

Please join Representatives Baldwin, Bass, Berkley, Berman, Blumenauer, Robert Brady, Braley, Capps, Capuano, Carnahan, Carson, Castor, Chandler, Cicilline, Yvette Clarke, Cohen, Cooper, Susan Davis, DeFazio, DeGette, Deutch, Dingell, Doggett, Doyle, Edwards, Ellison, Engel, Eshoo, Farr, Fattah, Filner, Garamendi, Gonzalez, Gene Green, Grijalva, Gutierrez, Hastings, Hinchey, Hirono, Honda, Jackson, Kildee, Kucinich, Langevin, Larsen, Barbara Lee, Lewis, Loeb sack, Lofgren, Lowey, Lynch, Markey, Maloney, Matsui, McCollum, McDermott, McGovern, McNerney, Meeks, George Miller, Moore, Chris Murphy, Nadler, Neal, Norton, Olver, Owens, Payne, Peters, Pingree, Polis, David Price, Rothman, Loretta Sanchez, Sarbanes, Sewell, Schakowsky, Bobby Scott, Slaughter, Speier, Sutton, Bennie Thompson, Mike Thompson, Tierney, Tonko, Towns, Tsongas, Velázquez, Van Hollen, Walz, Waters, Watt, Waxman, Welch, Frederica Wilson, Woolsey, Wu and Yarmuth in signing this important letter to Leadership urging them to restore funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Dear Colleague,

There is no doubt that in these tough economic times we must right-size spending and strengthen our fiscal condition. How we do that, however, must be done in a way that is thoughtful and does not disproportionately impact our rural communities, our children and universal access to high-quality radio programming.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers' Continuing Resolution proposes to cut all funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). H.R. 68 and H.R. 69 do this as well. Public broadcasting is America's largest classroom and we cannot force our stations to close their doors.

Funding for CPB is what makes our local public TV and radio stations thrive. It's what gives our communities a voice and provides the infrastructure that connects rural to urban. If passed, this bill would impact 21,000 jobs in hundreds of communities, big and small, across America.

From local programming that covers what's happening in your neighborhood and state legislature, to music from local artists and of all genres, to national and international news coverage, to one of the few sources of media proven to help children learn and close the achievement gap among children of different economic circumstances, all depend on funding from CPB.

Cutting CPB funding would save Americans less than half a cent a day, but would eliminate for many their one remaining source of locally focused and informed programming, and would take away the Public Broadcasting System (PBS), considered by the public to be the second-best use of taxpayer dollars, outranked only by defense spending.

We urge you to sign this letter calling on leadership to support the voice of our local communities and restore funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. If you would like to sign, please contact Michael Harold in Rep Blumenauer's office at x5-4811.

Sincerely,

Congressman Earl Blumenauer
Congresswoman Anna Eshoo
Congressman Ed Markey

Congresswoman Nita Lowey
Congresswoman Doris Matsui

Co-Chairs & Members of the Public Broadcasting Caucus

February 10, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker, House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader, House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

Every month, more than 170 million Americans have their lives enriched by tuning in or logging online to public radio and television stations. These local stations serve small towns and major cities across America. In rural areas, they can be the only source of free and high-quality local, national and international news, children's shows, and music and cultural programming. Across the country, public broadcasting directly supports 21,000 jobs, and almost all of them are in local public television and radio stations in hundreds of communities across America.

As Congress searches for ways to strengthen our fiscal condition, we must do so in a responsible way that does not disproportionately impact our rural areas. We urge you to maintain a healthy level of funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and public broadcasting at large.

Federal funding gives our communities a voice by covering local news and events in ways that weekly newspapers cannot and commercial radio stations do not. This is especially true in rural areas where funds appropriated by Congress can account for more than half of a station's budget and are increasingly the point source for local programming and emergency preparedness alerts.

In order to link remote communities and cover local news and events, rural stations require costly equipment and infrastructure. This means the federal investment is particularly important to smaller stations in the PBS system. While the appropriation equals about 15% of the system's revenue, that is an aggregate number. For many stations, the appropriation counts for as much as 40-50% of their budgets.

Local stations leverage each federal dollar to raise over six more through contributions from millions of people who voluntarily support pledge drives and with private grants. CPBs seed money is the third leg of the stool. Without continued federal funding, the stool does not stand, and many stations would be severely limited while others would disappear.

Eighty-nine percent of funds appropriated to CPB go directly to the more than 1,300 independently owned and operated public television and radio stations across the country, providing them with the revenues they need to produce local content and provide programming that serves their individual communities.

Despite a growing number of media sources, Americans continue to turn to public broadcasting since they provide distinctive programming valued by listeners and viewers. A 2009 survey indicated that the total audience for public radio has grown by more than 150 percent over the course of the last 20 years (1989-2009). Digital platforms have significantly increased the reach of public media. For example, pbs.org receives 20 million unique visitors each month. Now more than ever Americans depend on public broadcasting for non-commercial educational programming and online content for their kids, local news, important community information, as well as music and arts. That means that while TV channels, internet and satellite radio proliferate faster than at any time before, the use of public broadcasting has also increased, not decreased.

Public television is America's largest classroom, offering a cost-effective educational service used in homes and classrooms across the country. A large and growing body of research confirms that public media content helps children learn and close the achievement gap among children of different economic circumstances. There is no doubt that other media options are available to families, but public broadcasting is the only source free from commercial volatility and influence, with a singular interest in educating our kids.

We can all agree that we should right-size government spending, but we must do it in a way that doesn't deprive citizens across the country of a fundamental way to be educated, informed and inspired. We cannot turn our backs on one of America's most successful public-private partnerships, an indispensable service that delivers exceptional value to citizens in small towns and major cities. It is an appropriate role for our government and one that we hope you will support.

Sincerely,